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small handful of Knights, took over Malta in 1090. The islands became part of the kingdom of Sicily, and shared its varying fortunes till they were ceded to the Knights of St. John by the Emperor Charles V in 1530. 175 648

For the next three centuries the history of the Knights is so intimately concerned with the history of Malta that we must at least briefly consider the general position of the Order.

The Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem were finally ejected from the coast of Syria at the end of the thirteenth century. They occupied Rhodes in 1308. This island formed their home for over two hundred years. Early in 1523 they were driven from Rhodes, taking with them 4000 Rhodians. Given a temporary home at Viterbo by Pope Clement VII, a member of their own Order, they finally received the island of Malta from the Emperor Charles V under conditions of nominal feudal submission, to wit, the Grand Master to send a falcon to the Viceroy of Sicily every All Souls' Day.

The Order had an international character, and in the sixteenth century was divided into eight "Languages" or "Langues," according to the origin of the Knights, namely, Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Aragon, England, Germany and Castile. The English "Language" was suppressed in 1540, previous to which time many of the Knights who had been in England (the Grand Priory was situated in Clerkenwell) had either fled to Malta or been executed. The fiction of an English "Language" was, however, kept, and as late as 1782, on the foundation of a Bavarian "Language," this latter was united to the old English "Langue," which of course in reality no longer existed, and called the Anglo-Bavarian. The dominant element in the population of the Knights was certainly French, and the three French "Langues"—Provence, Auvergne and France—were certainly, both ethnologically and politically, the most important. The latter aspect was reflected in the great number of French Grand Masters.

For a generation after the occupation of the island by the Knights, Malta gradually succeeded in establishing an important position in the Mediterranean. There seems little doubt that men like Strozzi, La Vallette, Charles of Lorraine, and de Romegas were practically pirates, at least as far as their treatment of the Turk was concerned, and at this time a very large number of Turkish slaves, presumably chiefly of Negro origin, were introduced into the island. In 1564 Suliman the Magnificent decided to attack Malta. The story of the siege of Malta in 1565 is a magnificent passage in the history of this very distinguished Order of Chivalry. It only concerns us so far as it resulted in a reorganization of the fortifications of the island and the building of the great city of Valletta, called after the Grand Master of the Order, Jean Parisot de la Vallette. It is important for our purpose to remember that when the Turks were eventually driven from the island, the Order had only 600 men capable of bearing arms who had survived the struggle. [567]

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144 population does not appear to be very great. Slaves were, we know, introduced
● [567] in large numbers by the Knights of St. John, and a fine old building still remains in Valletta as a witness to the number of Negroes kept in captivity, but yet there appears to have been great segregation. The Turk in Cyprus seems to have been more merciful to his slaves than the Christian in Malta, possibly because of the difference in the social systems. It is doubtful, therefore, whether the Negro element is more than a negligible factor in Maltese ethnology.

Cases certainly occur, in all periods, of extremely long skulls of the hypsistenocephalic type of Giuffrida Ruggeri. Some of these specimens appeared on a careful examination to present Negroid characters; the majority seemed to be well within the range of normal variation of the ordinary Mediterranean type. If mixing with Alpines immediately raises the standard deviation of Mediterranean man, it is to be expected that a mixture with Negro or Proto-Ethiopic would have the same effect; without definitely denying the possibility of this type in Malta, it would seem a more reasonable hypothesis to suggest that those crania which present a combination of the characters of a long head with considerable prognathism and a wide nasal aperture probably belonged either to actually imported Negroes or to their descendants.

Although the census figures show a different result, it is of interest to note that among the people who presented themselves for measurement in villages or institutions, practically all the foreigners came from the Barbary coast.

[563] There can be little doubt that there has been considerable Italian influence in the island for a long period, and we have already shown that at the present day the largest resident foreign element apart from the garrison is Italian. It seems possible that the same influences, whatever they were, which made it possible for the early population to be swamped by the present type, have also made the latter immigrants, of a type similar to the Neolithic people, unable to stand against the domination of the sub-race (Malta second race) now established in the island.

144 A question of considerable importance from the practical point of view is
563 whether there is any essential difference between the Maltese and the nations of Western Europe, who, either singly or collectively, have occupied the island since the Middle Ages. Social distinctions have operated during the whole time, but there is evidence to suggest that the Knights may have considerably affected the population, especially that of Valletta. Some of the people of Rhodes, who followed the fortunes of the Knights when the latter were driven from the Eastern Mediterranean, settled in Malta. Mercenaries were employed by the Order, and in some cases never returned home. In later times also, the Knights' vows of chastity, never very strictly adhered to, were entirely neglected, and their illegitimate children, whose fathers were predominantly French, contributed a considerable element to the population (28, p. 46). It is probably to such influences that we owe those crania in the Chapel of Bones which appear to show Nordic affinities.